



AWAKE SLEEPER

— Augmented Edition —

(Part Two)



HOLY ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF BOSTON

86 Country Club Road

Dedham, Massachusetts 02026-5607

Tel: 781.329.6500 - Fax: 781.329.6800

Web Site: <http://www.homb.org>

HOLY ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF BOSTON

END NOTE

There is no way, of course, that one can verify with complete assurance the authenticity of some of these religious texts and Lives of the Saints as they have come down to us. That concern, however, misses the point. What *is* the point is that these accounts have been deemed entirely acceptable, and indeed, have been accepted into the life and piety of the Church, even to the degree of being incorporated into the Church's liturgical books. Evidently, it has been no problem for the Fathers and the faithful of all ages past to accept the teaching which we have outlined in the two pamphlets "Awake, Sleeper."

And what is this teaching? Simply this: God, not man, is in charge.

In the last analysis, of course, God, Who alone is the Knower of hearts and the ultimate Judge of the soul, will determine the final fate of everyone.

In the meantime, our duty is to ask for His mercy.

"With God, all things are possible."

(Matt. 19:26, Mark 10:26, Luke 18:27)

embrace Him or to reject Him. Man is a truly free creature, but he can enslave himself to sin, to the degree that he comes to hate even his Creator!

This is why Saint Isaac of Syria says, “O God, teach me to love Thee as much as I have loved sin.”

Therefore, for those who knew the Orthodox Faith in their lifetimes, but did not follow Christ or live according to His commandments, there is no other opportunity, there is no repentance in Hades. As for the others who never truly knew of Christ in their lifetimes, they will be judged according to their conscience, as the Apostle Paul teaches (Rom. 2:14-15). And, as the writings of the Saints and the Lives of the Saints instruct us, those souls who never knew of Christ will have the occasion to either accept or reject His Gospel (I Peter 3:18-20, and I Peter 4:6).

With these sobering thoughts, my beloved, knowing that we have a God Whose will it is to save us, let us apply ourselves with even greater diligence to the tenets of our Christian faith. Let us strive earnestly for the everlasting and incorruptible crown set before us, that we may be able to stand at the right hand of Christ in the fearful Judgment on the last day.

In these efforts and struggles, we have as our mediator before God the Father, Christ our Saviour, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, the Conqueror of the Kingdom of death; to Him together with the All-holy Spirit, is due all honor, worship and glory, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

My beloved Orthodox Christians: Christ is risen!

Truly He is risen!

Your fervent intercessor with Christ,

✠Ephraim, Metropolitan of Boston

Pascha, 2011

Protocol Number 2907

A REPENTANT PAGAN EMPEROR

In recent articles, I have made reference to Trajan, the Roman emperor who was responsible for some of the fiercest persecutions ever experienced by the Christians. Outrageous as it may seem at first sight, even a person like Trajan could find mercy from God. How is this?

As the Fathers say, “Judge no man, because, often we have seen a man sinning, but we have not seen him when he repents and weeps over his sin in secret.”

Saul, too, was a fanatical persecutor of the Christians, and yet, God, in His wisdom, picked him to become the chosen vessel and apostle of the nations: Saint Paul.

The Prophet Samuel anointed David, the youngest, most insignificant, and apparently least appropriate of Jesse’s sons, to be king of Israel, because “God sees not as a man looks; for man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart” (I Kingdoms 16:7).

In connection with some of our previous articles, one of our clergy contacted me and told me of some information at the end of the account of the martyrdom of Saint Ignatius the God-bearer, the bishop of Antioch (A.D. 107). The information concerns the Emperor Trajan, and tells us the following:

Furthermore, when Emperor Trajan [who was in the east, waging war against the Persians at the time] heard the report of the virtues of the God-bearing Ignatius, and how he had courageously endured martyrdom with a gladsome and cheerful countenance, and that he even thanked the emperor for sentencing him to be thrown to the beasts, Trajan came to revere not only Ignatius, but also all Christians; for they abstained from shameful deeds and fasted, they prayed throughout the night and, as ones worthy of praise, fulfilled

all the virtues. On account of this, the emperor *repented* [emphasis ours] for all his former acts against them and issued a decree that none of his governors or prefects should henceforth slay any Christian.

Wherefore, Ignatius proved to be of benefit to the Christians not only during his life, but even after his end did he become an occasion for the advance of piety, a comfort of the afflicted, a cause of disdain for this fleeting life, the renunciation of things harmful, the espousal of purity of life and the correction of error.

(From the Life of St. Ignatius the God-bearer,
Bishop of Antioch, + December 20, 107)

And what about Drosis,* Trajan's daughter who became a Christian and suffered martyrdom at his orders? Who knows what tears of remorse he might have shed as a father on her account?

Well, what can one say to this? Now we begin to understand why our Saviour taught us to love our enemies. It is not only because of the spiritual benefits that accrue to us, but also because our fiercest enemies might turn into friends!!

They might even find mercy from God....

"Judge no man before the time until the Lord come, Who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise from God."

(I Cor. 4:5)



*Celebrated on March 22.

In His desire to save mankind, my beloved, our Saviour has given such great power to the intercessions of the Saints!

And why is this?

The New Testament itself provides the answer:

God wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

I Timothy 2:4

He uses all means to accomplish this goal: His angels, His prophets, His apostles, His saints, His ministers in the holy priesthood, His Church.

By His crucifixion and death on the Cross, His descent into Hades, and His Resurrection, our Saviour has given an opportunity to those who believe in Him to inherit life everlasting in the joy of Paradise. Indeed, He wills that all men be saved.

But since, according to God's will, opportunity to believe in Christ and to be saved is given to all mankind, are all saved?

Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus answers this question:

What then? Did God save absolutely all when He appeared in Hades? In no wise. But there also He saved them that believed.

(*Homily on Christ's Descent into Hades*)

So even in Hades, man has the ability to believe, or disbelieve in our Saviour. Even in Hades, man can say "Yes" or "No" to the mercy of God. Even in Hades, man can come to the knowledge of the truth, or reject it. Such is the great mystery of mankind's free will. Man has the ability to love God or to wage war against Him, to

prevail against" the Church (Matt. 16:18), whereas the Greek text of the Gospel says, "and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against" the Church (*i.e.* the assembly of those who rightly believe in the True God). Properly speaking, in the Christian sense, Hell is a spiritual state or condition that will come to be only *after* the Final Judgment at the end of time.

ty in 1813 in his monastery on Paros.

This is what St. Athanasius has to say about the book, *A Treasury of Orthodoxy*, by the eighteenth century bishop, Theophilus of Ioannina:

I found hidden in this book the gold of the Faith, the silver of the Holy Mysteries, the pearls of the virtues, the precious stones of the apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions.

On page 236 in this remarkable book, so highly praised by Saint Athanasius of Paros, we find the following:

But you have learned that, since Hades has been trampled down by the almighty power of Christ's soul (I Peter 3:18-20), it always remains open, and, according to Christ's general decree, has not been shut yet.

Contrary to how some misinterpret this teaching, this destruction of Hades' dominion mentioned above in no way implies that Christ returns again and again to preach to the souls held in bondage there. Rather, by His omnipotent and everlasting grace, He is ever present there and everywhere, making Himself known as the eternally triumphant Vanquisher of death and true God of all. He is, after all, "everywhere present and fills all things!"

Elsewhere in the same book, *A Treasury of Orthodoxy*, (page 172), we find this text:

"Wondrous is God in His saints", and the most wonderful thing, as we are persuaded by the histories of the Divine Fathers, is that the supplications of the saints seized from Hades the souls of the impious. For Saint Basil of Seleucia says that St. Thecla, the first-martyr and equal to the apostles, on praying to God, freed from punishment Falconilla, an unbaptized pagan, when Tryphena, her mother, besought the saint.*

* In the Orthodox Christian understanding, Hades and Hell are not the same thing. The King James Version, for instance, has "and the gates of Hell shall not

THE MONKS' FAVORITE

*If Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord,
who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness.*

Psalm 129:3

In 1963, the year I was tonsured as a rassophor monk, we visited the Holy Mountain, Athos. From Thessalonica, we travelled by bus to the town of Uranoupolis, near the border of the Athonite peninsula. From there, we took a small motor-driven launch, locally known as an *atmákaton*, and sailed along the Athonite coast, stopping to visit some monasteries along the way. I was enthralled by the crystal-clear waters of the Aegean. One could gaze in wonder right down through the water to the sea floor, and see all the little fishies scurrying to get away from our boat as it plied the pristine waters over their heads.

An old monk was sitting at the prow of the ship and so the founder of our monastery in Boston, Father Panteleimon, asked him, "What monastery are you from, father?"

The monk replied, "The Monastery of Xenophon."

"Do you have a good abbot there?" Father Panteleimon asked again.

"Some monks love him, some can't stand to look at him," replied the old monk dryly.

At that point, a monk sitting next to Father Panteleimon in the boat nudged him in the side and whispered into his ear, "Father Panteleimon, the old monk that's talking to you *is* the abbot!"

"Oh!" said Father Panteleimon, surprised.

We all had a good chuckle over that one.

After a few moments, Father Panteleimon asked the old abbot again, "How many monks do you have in your monastery, reverend father?"

“For church, for work, or for mealtimes?” asked the abbot in turn.

Stifled laughter everywhere.

Well, anyway, to make a long story short, we finally arrived at the Monastery of Dionysiou. There, we were introduced to the famous and venerable abbot of the monastery, Father Gabriel, and we visited in his quarters for a time.

Afterward, we were given a tour of the monastery by one of the fathers. At one point in the tour we came to an area where the walls were covered with ancient frescoes. As we were examining the frescoes, we came to one that caught everyone’s attention. It depicted a soul being judged at the Last Judgement. The soul looked very worried, because the balance that was to weigh the soul’s deeds had a super-abundance of scrolls of evil deeds piled up on one side. On the side where the good deeds were, there was only one small scroll! However, the soul’s guardian angel was *tilting the balance so that the few good deeds out-weighed the many evil deeds!*

God’s mercy to the rescue!

On the next page is a sketch of that particular fresco, which was, obviously, very beloved and popular among the monks.



from death, as is manifest from many signs and wonders that have been revealed to us and have been delivered to us in written form.

So, in conclusion, we see, first of all, that these later sources of Orthodox teaching are entirely consistent with the Lives of the Saints and the ancient Patristic sources that we cited in earlier articles. Also, we find the answers to the questions: why do we commemorate all reposed Orthodox Christians in the memorial services in church — and, in our private prayers, even those who never knew the truth of the Orthodox Faith in their lifetime? Why do we give alms in their behalf?

The answer is clear: so that we may fulfill the greatest of all the commandments — “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God...and thy neighbor as thyself” (Matt. 23:37, 39).

We are bidden to love all men: both the living and the dead: “Whether we live...or die, we are the Lord’s” (Rom. 14:8).

This is how we maintain the bond of love, and this is why God is well-pleased when we fulfill this commandment of love. This is why He answers our prayers for the reposed, according to His great mercy: for the Last Judgment is yet to come.



THE PASCHAL ENCYCLICAL

of

His Eminence, Ephraim, Metropolitan of Boston

My beloved Christians:

One of the outstanding religious figures of Greece during the dark years of the Ottoman oppression was Saint Athanasius of Paros (+1813). An eminent theologian, educator and hymnographer, a staunch defender of the Church’s Holy Tradition, he was the second leader of the famous Kollyvades Fathers. He espoused the monastic life on the Holy Mountain in 1752, and reposed at the age of nine-

of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). We pray for all men, both living and dead. “For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Rm. 14:8).

Since Jesus has the keys of death and Hades, it follows that He is able to open Hades’ prison and free those who were condemned therein, *since the universal Judgment has not yet come to pass* [emphasis ours], we know only that, as regards those who have reposed, the righteous are found in a better state, and the sinners are in a worse state, until the universal Judgment.

From: *Death, Resurrection and Eternal Life*, Etoimasis Publishing House, Monastery of the Venerable Forerunner, 2002, Karyes, Athens, p. 157:

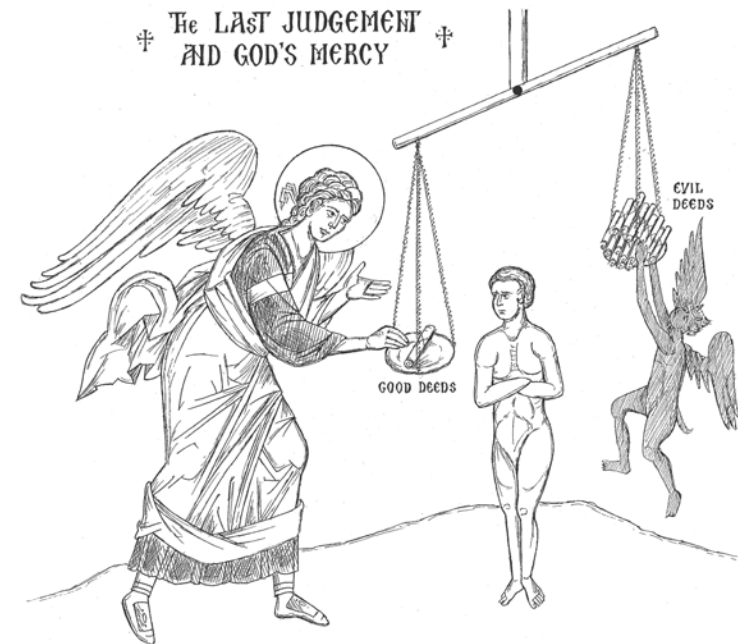
St. John Chrysostom asks: “Since we know that among past generations, there must have been thieves, grave-robbers, and other criminals, why has the Holy Church ordained that we should pray for the salvation of all”? He himself answers this question: “Perhaps because this might be the cause of some benefit and conversion for them.”

The Complete Works of Symeon of Thessalonica, Rigopoulos Publishing House, Thessalonica, p. 310 (This edition is a reprint of the 1882 Modern Greek edition):

Chapter 12: That the Sacrifice [i.e. the Holy Eucharist] is beneficial to the reposed.

Since our holy father Gregory of Rome, who is surnamed “the Dialogist”, redeemed a brother from punishment when he offered the Bloodless Sacrifice for forty days in his behalf, it is for this reason that it is most necessary that the reposed be commemorated for forty days at least.

It is evident that this Sacrifice is the cause of unspeakable benefit to many and that it releases them from bonds and



+ Based on frescoes at the monasteries in Meteora, the Holy Mountain and Serbia.

© Holy Nativity Convent, Brookline, MA

HERALDS OF GOD'S MERCY THROUGHOUT THE AGES

Editor's note: The following important paper, of which we are presenting a small portion, was written by Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky in 1911. In a sermon he gave on October 16/29, 1972, St. Philaret the Confessor of Orthodoxy, Metropolitan of New York, made reference to this particular portion of Metropolitan Anthony's paper. St. Philaret's sermon, in turn, was distributed on the internet by Father Panayiotis Carras of Toronto on November 13, 2009.

We have become accustomed to picturing the future lot of sinners in conformity with the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. In the flame of Hell the condemned will mourn over their sins in vain, and cry out to God and the saints for mercy without avail: the repentance of the dead is not accepted, it is too late to correct oneself! [But] why should this be so? Why a soul which has condemned its falls and changed its attitude, should nevertheless be rejected by divine justice, remains incomprehensible.

Hence originate the very natural attempts to set up fabrications about some new, universal reconciliation or *apokatástasis*. However, this teaching has been condemned by the Church, and the followers of Origen are considered heretics. And this is quite consistent: any attempt to interpret eternal torments as very prolonged torments, but not endless ones, contradicts the Word of God and the Tradition of the Church. It is sufficient to cite God's words in Esaias: *Their worm shall not die and their fire shall not be quenched* (Esaias 66:24). It is impossible to reinterpret these words in favor of prolonged torments, for it is directly indicated that they will have no end (cf. Revelation 14:11, 20:10.)

However, even if neither the Holy Bible nor the clearly expressed teaching of the Church had revealed to us the teaching that the torments are eternal, still our reason would be unable to

cations, Prayers, Memorial Services and Liturgies for the Reposed”:

“Wondrous is God in His saints”, and the most wonderful thing, as we are persuaded by the histories of the Divine Fathers, is that the supplications of the saints seized from Hades the souls of the impious. For St. Basil of Seleucia says that St. Thecla, the first-martyr and equal to the apostles, on praying to God, freed from punishment Falconilla, an unbaptized pagan, when Tryphena, her mother, besought the saint.

Furthermore, the divine [John] Damascene says that St. Gregory the Dialogist prayed to God and freed from punishment the pagan Emperor Trajan. But God told Gregory, ‘I have heard your prayer and granted forgiveness to Trajan; but as for you, do not pray to Me again for the impious.’ Hence, [we learn from this that] if the prayers of virtuous people have such power when they are made for the impious, how much more power will they have when they are made for sinful Christians, both living and dead?

From *The Precious Pearl*, Spyridon Megaloeconomos, St. Nicodemus Publishing House, Athens, Greece, p. 161:

Protestant: Why do you pray for the reposed? Do you not know that there is no repentance in Hades? And besides this, there is a great abyss between them and us. Is it not true that once men die, there is then the Judgment?

Orthodox: Indeed, he that has died can no longer do anything in behalf of his salvation.* But this does not hinder the living from commemorating and praying for his salvation. Indeed, it is incumbent upon the living to do this, according to the Scriptures:

“Pray ye for one another that ye may be healed. The prayer

* This is true for those who knew the Law of God during their lifetime. According to the Holy Scriptures (see Romans 2:14-15), they who knew not the Law will be judged according to their conscience.

to them, according to [St. Peter], that the great message of salvation was preached when they were already judged as men in the flesh, that is, when they received, through life in the flesh, punishment for crimes against one another, so that they could live according to God, in the spirit, that is, the soul; *being in Hades, they accepted the preaching of the knowledge of God, believing in the Saviour Who descended into Hades to save the dead*. So, in order to understand [this] passage in [Holy Scriptures] let us take it in this way: *the dead, judged in the human flesh, were preached to precisely for the purpose that they may live according to God by the spirit*.

St. Maximus the Confessor
Questions and Answers to Thalassius, #7.



— Conclusion —
THE BOND OF LOVE

— Why We Commemorate the Reposed —
Compiled by a Layman of our Church

From *A Treasury of Orthodoxy*, Theophilus of Ioannina,
Rigopoulos Publishing House, Thessalonica, p. 236:

But you have learned that, since Hades has been trampled down by the almighty power of Christ's soul (I Peter 3:18-20), it always remains open, and, according to Christ's general decree, has not been shut yet. It is for this cause that the supplications, prayers and Liturgies of our holy Church, as well as the acts of almsgiving to the poor done for the reposed Orthodox, are effectual, and many souls are thereby rescued from torment, according, that is, to the quality and gravity of their sins.

From the same book, Chapter 79, p. 172: "Concerning Suppli-

avoid this sad conclusion about the future lot of conscious enemies of God and unrepentant sinners. In fact, the only alternative would be to allow that the Lord would make them righteous by force and drag them into His joy; but where there is compulsion, there moral values no longer exist, and the very difference between good and evil disappears—and together with it, the whole meaning of [God's] Redemption and Economy. Is it possible to surmise that there are no people who are consciously and definitively evil, that evil is the result of lack of understanding and imperfection, as the pantheists and evolutionists teach, as well as even some theists? Such a notion, however, is likewise incompatible with the teaching about free will, and even more so with the teaching of the Holy Scriptures and the Church about the demons, which no halfway sincere reader of the Gospel can interpret in some other way, whether he himself believes in God or not. Finally, we have the direct words of Christ concerning the fact that His enemies hated Him not because they did not understand Him, but precisely because they had understood Him, and in His person had hated Truth itself and Goodness itself. *If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth* (John 9:41). *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hateth Me hateth My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father* (John 15: 22-24).

Thus the teaching that the torments are eternal proceeds not only from the clear meaning of the Word of God and the Tradition of the Church; it is inescapable even if one resolves the question by the aid of reason alone.

"But," the reader will object, "this is not at all what we see in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. There we do not have an unrepentant and hardened evildoer, but a soul bitterly lamenting its sins, and moreover filled with compassion for other sinners still abiding on earth. Why should such a soul not find mercy with the Lord?"

This objection, in our opinion at least, is entirely well-grounded, and it would be hard to deal with it if it was the final lot of the dead which is described in this Parable. But let us recall that the Lord said this to the Jews before His descent into Hades: would it [i.e., His Descent into Hades] not have been saving for the Rich Man who had repented of his sinful life? Of course it would, for the Apostle testifies that not only righteous people, but sinners as well were saved by the Vanquisher of Hades: *Christ also suffered once for sins, the Just One for the unjust ones, so that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which were once disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.* (1 Peter 3:18-20).

From these words of the Apostle we may draw the clear conclusion that Abraham's words in the Parable about the great chasm fixed between the righteous and sinners, which neither the one nor the other can cross, referred to the time *before* the appearance [in Hades] of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who traversed this chasm on the day of His saving death and resurrection.* He delivered from thence not only the righteous, but many who *were once disobedient* as well, who had not become entirely hardened in their opposition to the Truth.

Thus, the state of sinful souls condemned forever will not at all be that state experienced by the Rich Man in this Parable, who humbly begged that his brothers living on earth might be brought to their senses.

(Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky,
On The Future Life and Eternal Torments)

* Metropolitan Anthony makes a good point here, because it is evident that this Parable refers to the time *before* the Final Judgment. This is evident from the fact that the Rich Man of the Parable can still make an appeal for his brothers *who are still living on earth and still have an opportunity to repent*. The end of time has not yet arrived, and the eternal punishment of those condemned has not yet commenced.

peace to those upon the earth, and of release to the prisoners, and of sight to the blind, and became to those who believed the Author of everlasting salvation and to those who did not believe a reproach of their unbelief, *so He might become the same to those in Hades: That every knee should bow to Him, of things in Heaven, and things in earth and things under the earth* [Phil. 2:10]. And thus after He had freed those who had been bound for ages, straightway He rose again from the dead, showing us the way of resurrection.

Exposition of the Orthodox Faith

Book III, chap. 29

St. John of Damascus



PREACHING TO THE DEAD IN HADES

That They Might Live in the Spirit

by

St. Maximus the Confessor

“For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit”.

(1 Peter 4:6)

It is a usage in Scripture to interchange the tenses and to render one by another; the future as past, and the past as future, and the present as expressing a time preceding it or following it, as is evident to them who are well experienced in Scripture. Some say that the Scriptures call “dead” those who died before the coming of Christ, for instance, those who were in the time of the Flood, at Babel, in Sodom, in Egypt, as well as others who in various times and ways received the varied penalties and terrible afflictions of the divine judgments. These men were punished not so much for their ignorance of God as for the outrages they imposed on one another. It was

on thee, I am Thy God, Who for thy sake became thy son, for thy sake and for thy descendents sake, and now I say and with authority command the shackled, come forth! And those in darkness, be enlightened! And those asleep, arise! Thee I enjoin, **Awake, O sleeper!** For I did not fashion thee to be held in Hades as a captive”.

The Lamentations of Matins of Holy and Great Saturday,
HTM, Boston, MA 1981, p. 49*

Concerning Mark 16:15

Finally, Mr. Guindon’s use of our Saviour’s words in the Gospel of St. Mark is simply irrelevant and disingenuous. He writes:

“In Mark 16:15, 16, we learn how necessary it is to receive the Gospel and be baptized.

And he said unto them, **Go** ye into all the world, and **preach** the gospel to every creature. He that **believeth** and is **baptized** shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” p. 8.

Our Saviour’s words here refer to those who had the opportunity to hear the preaching of the Gospel and consequently either to believe, be baptized and be saved or not to believe and be condemned. But the debate at hand is about the people who **never** had the opportunity to hear the preaching of the Gospel, and therefore had neither had the chance to believe or to reject our Saviour’s teaching.



His deified soul descended into Hades, in order that, just as He, the Sun of Righteousness, rose for those upon the earth, *so likewise He might bring light to those who sit under the earth in darkness and shadow of death:* in order that, just as He brought the message of

*See also page 14 of this pamphlet.



More Herald's

Wherefore the devil sets everything in motion in order to root in us the reasoning which comes of despair: for he knows that if we repent even a little we shall not do this without some reward. But just as he who gives a cup of cold water has his recompense reserved for him so also the man who has repented of the evils which he has done — even if he cannot exhibit the repentance which his offences deserve — will have a commensurate reward. *For not a single item of good, however small it may be, will be overlooked by the righteous Judge. For if He makes such an exact scrutiny of our sins, as to require punishment for both our words and thoughts, much more will our good deeds, whether they be great or small, be reckoned to our credit at that day.*

(St. John Chrysostom
Letter One to the Fallen Theodore, 9)



“God overlooked the times of ignorance, but now He commands all men everywhere to repent.”

(Acts 17:30)

Surely, if God overlooked from the foundation of the world *the transgressions committed by people out of ignorance*, and He gives to each the forgiveness of transgressions, fittingly did He come among us at the end of the ages, in order that His boundless love of mankind might be received in accord with the measure that He reveals His presence.*

St. Ammonius

* Commentary on Acts 17:30. *Catenae Graecorum Patrum in Novum Testamentum*. J. A. Cramer, ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1840.

There is some confusion about the identity of this Ammonius. There were two who bore the name Ammonius and who wrote commentaries on the Holy Scriptures. Both lived in Alexandria, Egypt, one in the third century, and one in the fifth.



Be a herald of God's goodness, for God rules over you, unworthy though you are. Although your debt to Him is so very great, He is not seen exacting payment from you; and from the small works you do, He bestows great rewards upon you. *Do not call God just, for His justice is not manifest in the things concerning you.* And if David calls Him just and upright [see Ps. 24:8; 144:17], His Son revealed to us that He is good and kind. "He is good", He says, "to the evil and impious" [see Luke 6:35]. . . Where then, is God's justice, for while we were sinners Christ died for us! [see Rom. 5:8].

(St. Isaac of Syria, *Ascetical Homilies*, Homily 51)



WHEN IRISH EYES AREN'T SMILING

It was a beautiful spring day in the European countryside. The sea of green was spreading quickly in the thick forests, where the trees were awakening from their long winter sleep and the emerging bright leaves were bursting from their boughs.

Under their thickening canopy, the kindly monk, Father Clement, trekked from one hamlet to the other, bringing the joyous tidings of the Gospel of Christ. To the idolaters in these lands, the good father's message was a reasonable one, filled with hope and the promise of life everlasting in the company of a merciful and man-befriending God. Father Clement, a missionary monk from Ireland, taught them about the miracles and teachings of Christ, the God Who became a man, born of a chaste Virgin. He told the peasant

Concerning the phrase "Awake, Sleeper!"

Both Fr. Panagiotes and Marc Guindon claim that Metropolitan Ephraim's use of the words "Awake, Sleeper!", (which are taken from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians: "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." 5:14), are misleading, since these words do not refer to our Saviour's descent into Hades. Fr. Panagiotes even goes as far as to write that:

"Nowhere are we told by the Holy Fathers that this passage from Saint Paul (Ephesians 5:14) instructs us in any posthumous preaching or enlightenment. Rather it is a call to the living to awake from their sinful sleep."

Letter of Fr. Panagiotes Concerning the meeting in Boston,
dated April 8th, 2011, N.S

Mr. Guindon makes a similar claim and says:

"There is not a sliver of a doubt that the Apostle exhorts Christians to a lifestyle worthy of their profession as sons of God, children of light. Such an encouragement was needed because the pagan world enveloped Christians and the temptation for recent converts would be to run with the crowd, to please their former companions. Some Christians appeared to be sleeping instead of being awake to the dangers threatening them. Obviously, this passage has nothing to do with a possible conversion of souls in Hades!" p. 15

Evidently, neither Fr. Panagiotes Carras nor Marc Guindon, have read the famous homily of St. Epiphanius of Cyprus on the Lord's Descent into Hades, wherein, we read:

"Then Adam the first-fashioned beholding Him, beat his breast in exuberance and cried to all, 'My Lord be with you all!' and Christ replied and said to Adam, 'And with thy spirit' and grasping his hand, He said, **"Stand up, Awake, O Sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine**

this belief was introduced into the teaching of the Church from apocryphal writings!

Mr. Guindon writes:

“We see nothing in the passage (i.e. 1 Peter 3:19) requiring us to believe that Jesus was preaching to disembodied souls/spirits while He was dead in Hades. Such ideas are perhaps traceable to extra-biblical books such as 1 Enoch and the Acts of Pilate and may have influenced the early Christian interpretation of 1 Peter 3:19-20 in their speculation about what Christ was doing for three days while in the grave.” *p. 14*

And again:

“Although, our goal all along is to review the scriptural arguments presented in the Metropolitan's writings, we do not wish to ignore his appeal to the Church Fathers. Our examination of several early Christian writers reveals that they may at times reflect current opinions of certain Jewish writers during the centuries preceding and following the birth of Jesus Christ. Wishing to avoid a long digression here, we simply admit that suppositions about Hades are present in the pseudepigrapha like "The Acts of Pilate" (Part II) and the "Book of Enoch" of the first two centuries BC. The latter was especially esteemed by several early Christian writers.”

p. 17

Since Fr. Panagiotes Carras commends this article by Marc Guindon and writes that: **"The article is well researched, well written and presents the teaching of the Church"**, we would like to ask him: does he agree with Mr. Guindon's opinion that our Saviour never descended into Hades to preach to the souls imprisoned there?

folk of how Christ had healed diseases, raised the dead, demonstrated His divine authority over the elements, and finally, how He had been slandered out of envy by the leaders of the Jewish people, and been delivered over to death by crucifixion. Yet, even after this, He proved to be the Vanquisher of death, for He descended into the land where the souls of the dead were held captive, said Father Clement, and released all those detained there, including the pagans who died without knowing Him, and He proclaimed to them Who He was. If they believed in Him, they could follow Him into Paradise. If they did not accept Him, they would remain prisoners of Satan and his malicious angels forever.

The pagans who heard Father Clement rejoiced, and hastened in droves to the baptismal waters, so that they too could become members of the chosen flock of this benevolent God. They wanted to become card-carrying members of His Church, so that they too could partake of His Body and Blood, and thereby inherit a position among the elite, among the brightest stars in the spiritual firmament of the everlasting Kingdom of the Ruler of all.

When one is running in this type of race, after all, one wants to win a gold, or a silver, or at least a bronze medal. Who wants to be an “also ran”, or an Honorable Mention?

However, back at the local headquarters in Rome, the news of Father Clement's successes in converting the pagans brought not a smile, but rather a scowl, to Pope Boniface's face. It was now the seventh century after Christ, and, in the West, the rising waters of Augustinianism were hardening into thick walls that were, eventually, to separate the West from its Eastern brethren.

Augustine's interpretations of the Scriptures varied widely from those of the Church Fathers on many points, as Jerome pointed out in his correspondence with the Bishop of Hippo.* One point of variance was Augustine's understanding of Christ's descent into Hades.

* See my earlier article, “A Turning Point.”

On this particular issue, Augustine, the “founding father of the western Church,” seemed genuinely confused. On the one hand, he seemed to believe that Christ’s descent into Hades was limited, or “partial.” On the other hand, he understood this event in Christ’s ministry only in a purely metaphorical sense. In other words, it didn’t “really” happen (See *The City of God*, 20, 15; *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 12, 33; and *Letter 164*, IV, 15-16). He maintained, instead, that the spirits mentioned in I Peter 3:18-20 were living people imprisoned *in ignorance!*

As the influence of his writings grew in the West, so also did the West’s estrangement from the East grow correspondingly.

Therefore, by the seventh century, we have a Pope scowling instead of smiling at the news of the Irish monk Clement’s *success* in bringing the pagans to Christianity. Actually, the Pope wasn’t unhappy about Father Clement’s success. Rather, he was unhappy about Father Clement’s preaching about Christ’s descent into Hades. Thanks to Pope Boniface’s sincere Augustinianism, he believed that “the totally depraved” heathen — as he would have termed them — who had died from ages past were predestined to eternal damnation and to everlasting Hell-fire. So what was all this loose talk about Christ converting even pagans in Hades that the monk Clement was talking about? Just to make his point clear, Pope Boniface summoned a council in Toledo, Spain in 625 to condemn Father Clement (see Pope Boniface’s *Letter LVII*, PL 89:153). And, in order to make sure that this Irish monk’s doctrine did not spread any further, he summoned another council in Toledo in 633 to condemn this teaching again, and, for good measure, the council fathers added the *filioque* to the Creed to stop (the council fathers said) the Arians and, no doubt, to teach the Greeks (who, in the estimation of some Western writers, were all semi-Pelagians anyway) a thing or two.

A wedge had been driven between the East and the West, and although it went unnoticed for a time, it was there.

appeared to them in the lower regions, and thus they too benefited from His coming. **Going in His soul, He preached to those who were in Hades appearing to them as one soul to other souls.** When the gatekeepers of Hades saw Him, they fled; the bronze gates were broken open, and the iron chains were undone. **And the Only-Begotten Son shouted with authority to the suffering souls, according to the word of the New Covenant, saying, to those in chains: “Come forth” and to those in darkness: “Be enlightened”.** In other words, He preached to those who were in Hades also, so that He might save all those who would believe in Him. For both those who were alive on earth during the time of His Incarnation and those who were in Hades had a chance to acknowledge Him. The greater part of the New Covenant is beyond nature and tradition, so that while Christ was able to preach to all those who were alive at the time of His appearing and those who believed in Him were blessed, so too He was able to liberate those in Hades who believed and acknowledged Him, by His descent there. However, the souls of those who practiced idolatry and outrageous ungodliness, as well as those who were blinded by fleshly lusts, did not have the power to see him, and they were not delivered.”

Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Vol. 11,
InterVarsity Press, 2000, p. 107-108.

St. Cyril makes it abundantly clear that the Apostle’s words “He went and preached unto the spirits in prison” refers to our Saviour’s descent into Hades and His preaching to the souls imprisoned there.

But this is not all. The author is not content with misinterpreting entirely the words of the Apostle, and with rejecting the very notion that our Saviour ever preached to anyone in Hades (whether the righteous or the sinners), he makes an audacious statement, that

Instead of consulting the Fathers of the Church, Mr. Guindon presents us with his own, personal interpretation as to what the Apostle actually meant by the words: “He went and preached unto the spirits in prison” The author flatly denies that these words are said in reference to our Saviour’s preaching in Hades. But rather, the author asks:

“...what did Peter mean when he wrote *by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison* (3:19)? Was Christ busy while He lay three days in the grave? Did He go down into Sheol, or Tartarus, or some other compartment of the underworld to evangelize those who died without knowledge of His death and resurrection? And, does Christ continue to enlighten dead souls? p. 13

As Mr. Guindon moves on to develop his untenable argument, he would have us believe that here, St. Peter, is not referring at all to our Saviour’s descent into Hades and His preaching to the souls imprisoned there. Rather, the author claims that the “preaching” of our Saviour was done to the “angels and principalities and powers” during His Ascension (!). It only remains for us to wonder, and ask Mr. Guindon: where in the Holy Tradition of the Church did he find even a hint of such an opinion? Can Mr. Guindon bring a single patristic reference to substantiate his claims? He certainly cannot, because this interpretation of the words of the Apostle is an unheard-of novelty. But how did the *Fathers* interpret the words of St. Peter? St. Cyril of Alexandria, in his commentary on this very passage of St. Peter’s Epistle, says the following:

“Here Peter answers the question which some objectors have raised, namely, if the incarnation was so beneficial, why was Christ not incarnated for such a long time, given that he went to the spirits which were in prison and preached to them also? In order to deliver all those who would believe, Christ taught those who were alive on earth at the time of his Incarnation, and these others acknowledged Him when he

But it was poor Father Clement who got clobbered with the papal shillelagh.

And all he had done was to repeat exactly what some Saints in the East were saying.....



A PLACE TO SLEEP

Or

Why the Ancient Greeks Liked Sleeping in Cemeteries

For what reason have our fathers decreed that we should gather here [at the cemetery] and not at some other martyrium? Because a great number of the dead reposes here. Since Jesus descended to the dead on this day [Holy Saturday], this is why we also gather here. This too is why this place is called a cemetery [i.e. a place of sleep], so that you may learn that they who died and are buried here did not die, but sleep and slumber. Because before Christ came into the world, death was called death. “In whatsoever day ye eat of this tree, ye shall surely die” (Gen. 2:17). And again, “the soul that sins shall die” (Ezek. 18:20). And David says, “The death of sinners is evil” (Ps. 33:27), and again, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” (Ps. 115:6). And Job says, “Death is rest to a man” (Job. 3:23). And it was called not only death, but also Hades. Listen to David who says, “Yet God shall redeem my soul out of the hand of Hades when he receiveth me” (Ps. 48:16). And Jacob says, “Ye shall bring down mine old age with sorrow to Hades” (Gen. 42:38).

Such were the names that death had before. But since Christ came and died for the life of the world, death is no longer called death, but sleep and slumber. And that it is called sleep is manifest from what Christ says: “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth” (John 11:11). He said not “died,” though indeed he was dead. So that you may learn that the word “sleep” was strange, look at how the disciples

became troubled and said, “Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.” To such a degree did they misunderstand His words. And again, Paul says, “Then they also which are fallen asleep are perished” (I Cor. 15:18). And elsewhere, he says again, “We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep,” meaning the dead (I Thess. 4:15). And elsewhere he says, “Awake, sleeper,” and in order to show that he says this concerning the dead, he adds, “and arise from the dead” (Eph. 5:14).

Behold, everywhere death is called sleep, and that is why this is called a place of sleep [a cemetery]. Indeed, this word is useful to us and filled with much wisdom. Therefore, when you bring a dead man here, do not grieve, because you are not bringing him to death, but to sleep. And the phrase “a place of sleep” is sufficient to console your grief. Learn where you bring him: to a place of sleep. And when have you brought him to a place of sleep? After the death of Christ, when the strength of death has been destroyed.

Consequently, both from the place and from the time you may glean much consolation. These words are especially appropriate for women, since this sex is somewhat more compassionate and more prone to grief. But the name of this place is a very effective medication for grief. That is why we gather here.

(St. John Chrysostom, *On the Name of the Cemetery*, I. 5-25)



Before Christ’s coming, Abraham is in the lower regions; after Christ’s coming, the Thief is in Paradise. And therefore at His rising again, “many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and were seen in the heavenly [*sic*] Jerusalem.” Then was fulfilled the saying, “Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will enlighten thee” (Eph. 4:15).

(Jerome, *Letter 60, to Heliodorus*, 3)



gave on the assassination of the young emperor Valentinian II, this great hierarch and Father of the Church assured his congregation that, although Valentinian was only a catechumen when he died unexpectedly, his mere *intention* to be baptized was sufficient for his salvation (*On Valentinian*, 51).

The objectors may be right about the issue we’ve been discussing, and maybe they are not. Is not God a *just* Judge of every man who ever lived on earth? Is He not also a merciful God? Will God show mercy to those who never knew the truth of the Christian faith in their lifetime? We will all find out at the Last Judgment.

I, for one, believe that He is both just (i.e. fair) and merciful.

In Christ,

✠Metropolitan Ephraim



Comments Regarding Marc Guindon’s Article

Is Now the Day of Salvation, 2 Cor 6:2?

Are Repentance and Salvation Possible in Hades?

Concerning 1 Peter, 3:19.

by Frs. Gregory and Theologos, monks
of Holy Transfiguration Monastery

On pages 13-14 of the article, Marc Guindon makes an attempt to explain the following words of the Apostle Peter:

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.”

1 Peter, 3:19-20.

Sergius cited Trumbower is because Trumbower cites St. Mark of Ephesus! Trumbower also demonstrates how St. Mark refuted the Latin doctrine of Purgatory at the Council of Florence. “Bravo” to Trumbower! When the non-Orthodox do something good and useful, shouldn’t we pat them on the back? We often rely on “heretical sources” — as our objectors term them — when those sources, in turn, quote the Saints and the Church Fathers. This happens all the time. When did this become *verboten*? Why is Father Sergius being misrepresented in this manner? In fact, do not those who object to *Awake, Sleeper* quote Migne (a Roman Catholic source) and the Post-Nicene Series (a Protestant source)? Heretical sources!

2. Contrary to what our objectors maintain, the Lives of the Saints *are* a source of Orthodox Christian teaching and doctrine, especially when the Saints and Fathers of the Church cite them — as the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council did, for example, when they cited the Lives of the Saints to support the veneration of the holy icons.

3. The soul beyond the grave is found in a state of timelessness. The Church’s hymnology calls this “the unwaning Day.” There is no time in that “land”. So all the aspects of our Saviour’s work for our salvation in that realm take on an eternal nature. Hence, there is no need for our Saviour to “repeat” anything there.

4. If, after death, there is no mercy or forgiveness, why do we have Memorial Services in Church? Is it so that everyone may munch on *kollyva* after the service? Why do we do good and give alms for the benefit of the souls of the reposed Orthodox Christians, if there is no benefit or change for them through God’s mercy after death?

5. The objectors also find fault with the reposed Father Seraphim Johnson for mentioning the teaching of a “baptism of desire”, which, they say, is foreign to the Orthodox Church. In fact, this doctrine is not unknown to the Orthodox Christian Church’s tradition. For example, in the sermon that St. Ambrose of Milan

In Ancient Greece, bedrooms were called *koimêteria* — “places of sleep.” It is from this Greek word that we derive our word “cemetery”. Thanks to the influence that the Christian Faith had on the Greek language, as we can see from St. John Chrysostom’s sermon quoted above, the word *koimêterion* came to mean the place where we bury those who have reposed.

So, it can be truly said that the Ancient Greeks liked to take their naps in cemeteries!



THE KNEE THAT BOWS

In his Epistle to the Phillipians, St. Paul says:

Therefore God hath highly exalted Him,
and given Him a name which is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
of things in Heaven and things on earth
and things under the earth,
and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ
is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

(Phillipians 2:9-11)

St Paul says that, ultimately, all (even the demons and atheists) will become believers. In one of his interpretations of this passage, St. John Chrysostom says, “every knee will bow; some, indeed, will bow unwillingly.” That is to say, not all will be saved. But St. John the Golden-mouth does not tell us how many the “some” are. Will they be 90% of mankind? 10%? 50%? He does not say. We will all find out at the Last Judgment who they will be.

Also, in the passage from Phillipians above, is St. Paul speaking about our Saviour’s descent into Hades, or the Last Judgment? It

could be either or both; in any case, everyone's final destiny will become evident and we will all know at the Last Judgment.

We have spoken before about the "degrees" or "levels" in Paradise or Gehenna, as St. Ephraim the Syrian describes them in his "Hymns of Paradise".

There is a whole spectrum of blessedness or anguish that awaits each person in the other life, according to each one's deserts and according to God's mercy.

We should keep in mind Romans 4:15: "where there is no law, there is no transgression." Consequently, those who know not Christ are judged according to their conscience:

"For when the heathen, who have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, they, though not having the Law, are a law unto themselves, which shows the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts meanwhile either accusing or excusing one another." (Romans 2:14-15).



164 B. C.

The Old Testament Teaching on the Resurrection
and On the Efficacy of Memorial Services
[From the Spring, 1990 Issue of *The True Vine*]

Can prayers and offerings be made on behalf of the departed? And do the departed receive benefit from these prayers and offerings?

In II Maccabees, the twelfth chapter, we read a description of a battle that took place between Gorgias of Idumea and the Jews, 164 years before Christ. After the defeat of Gorgias, the Jews came to bury their dead: under the coats of the Jews who had fallen were

MY RESPONSE

To Those Who Object to the Articles in *Awake, Sleeper*
(slightly edited)

Why is it okay for St. John of Damascus, St. Mark of Ephesus, the Blessed Bessarion of Georgia, Patriarch Dositheus of Jerusalem, the Greek and Slavonic editions of the *Triodion*, and the periodical *St Agathangelos* (published by the zealot fathers of the Holy Mountain) to believe and teach the accounts of Falconilla, Dinocrates, Trajan, and the heretical Byzantine emperor Theophilus the iconoclast being rescued from sufferings in Hades in the centuries *after* Christ's descent into Hades, but it is *not* okay for Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston to believe and teach this?

How were these individuals rescued? Obviously, by God's mercy and by somehow becoming one with the Orthodox Christians in faith *after* our Saviour's descent into Hades.

Why is it okay for St Cyril of Alexandria and St Romanos the Melodist to believe and teach that the people who die *in the future* will have an opportunity to be rescued from suffering in Hades, but it is *not* okay for Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston to believe and teach this?

Why is it okay for Ss. Lev and Joseph of Optina to pray that those who reposed not knowing the Orthodox Christian faith may be shown mercy in Hades, but it is not okay for Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston to pray for this?

Especially when Metropolitan Ephraim has clearly said that this teaching is where the writings of the Church come down on both sides of the question?

Some Additional Thoughts

1. Those who object also castigate Father Sergius of Holy Transfiguration Monastery for quoting the non-Orthodox author Trumbower. But the objectors fail to note that the only reason Father

of Hades stand open, and until the last judgment no one is as yet irrevocably condemned to remain there for eternity.” It is significant that in this prayer on Pentecost, Christ’s harrowing of Hades is seen as an open-ended process, precisely the point of view that Augustine wished to quash in his *Epistle 164, to Evodius*.

In contrast to the Augustinian certainty that God would never posthumously save an unbaptized person or a grievous sinner, many Eastern Theologians are inclined to leave the matter up to God. If He wishes to be merciful, as in the cases of Falconilla or Trajan, so be it (*Rescue for the Dead*, pg. 152).

*The Prayer of the Elder, Saint Lev of Optina,
for the Reposed Heterodox*

Have mercy, O Lord, if it is possible, on the soul of Thy servant (*name*) departed to eternal life in separation from Thy Holy Orthodox Church. Unsearchable are Thy judgments! Account not this my prayer as sin, but may Thy holy will be done.

Elder Joseph of Optina, p. 294
©1984, Holy Transfiguration
Monastery, Brookline, MA



Greek Hades and the Semitic Sheol are the realms of the dead in contrast to Gehenna, which our Lord Jesus Christ uses to indicate the place of eternal torment after the final judgment and is the equivalent of the modern usage of Hell. We have changed Ware’s use of Hell to Hades to avoid confusion on this point

found “things consecrated to the idols of the Jamnites, which is forbidden the Jews by the Law.” *The Jews prayed that God might put this out of remembrance* [emphasis added], after which Judas, their commander, gathered a large quantity of silver to send to Jerusalem as a sin offering,

. . . doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection; for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And also in that he perceived that there was great favour laid up for those that had fallen asleep in piety, it was a holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin.

II Macc. 12:43-45

On reading the incident recorded above, any Orthodox Christian will realize at once that the matter concerning the Israelite soldiers who had fallen in battle is much more serious than an ordinary “sin”. Yet, the Holy Scriptures record that their commander did “very well and honestly” when he prayed that God might put the iniquity of the fallen warriors out of His remembrance.

From this passage, therefore, we learn that the Israelites believed in the resurrection, and also that they acknowledged that prayers for the reposed avail much, no matter how great their sin.



SATURDAY OF SOULS

In both the Greek and Slavonic editions of the *Triodion*, the liturgical book that is used in Orthodox Christian churches during the season of Great Lent, on the Saturday before Meat-fare Sunday we celebrate a Memorial Service for all the souls that have departed.

This is called “the Saturday of Souls.”

After the sixth ode of Matins, there is the *Synaxarion*, that is, the commemoration and account concerning the saint or the liturgical event of the day. This, in part, is what we read in the *Triodion* in the account concerning the Saturday of Souls:

We always remember the souls of the dead on the Sabbath, for the Sabbath (Saturday) is the day of rest. In Hebrew, Sabbath literally means “rest.” As the Jews had this day for their repose and paused from every work and professional dealing, we Christians have it to remember the repose of our fathers and brethren. On this day, we hold memorial services and have *koliva* blessed in the church, give alms, and perform various works of mercy. All these practices are of great benefit to the departed souls. Since the Orthodox Church does not celebrate Divine Liturgies on weekdays during Great Lent where the dead can be commemorated, the second, third, and fourth Saturdays of the Fast are designated as Soul Saturdays.

There are many proofs that the souls of the departed can be greatly benefited by what is done in their behalf. St. Macarios the Egyptian once saw the dry skull of a pagan by the road on his way, and asked, saying, “Do you ever have any kind of consolation in Hades?” And the skull answered, “Yes, Father, especially when you pray for the sake of the dead; abundant is the comfort which we then enjoy.” The great man became very happy, because he always prayed for the dead and wished to be assured of the results of his intercessions.

Another saint, Gregory the Dialogist, saved the Roman Emperor Trajan through his prayers, although he heard from God never to pray like that on behalf of an impious non-Christian again. Also Theodora the Empress, by the prayers

was a great abyss between them. It is open to question whether Saint Perpetua believed that her pagan brother would one day join her in Paradise.

Author Jeffery Trumbower (mentioned above) has this interesting observation to make:

“Many subsequent Greek theologians did not hesitate to invoke the example of Thecla’s prayer for Falconilla and others similar to it, Gregory the Great’s prayer for Trajan, in their discourse on prayer for the dead. The earliest of these is a text attributed to John of Damascus (d. 749) titled *Concerning those who have fallen asleep in the faith*.the author invokes the example of Thecla and Falconilla...the text clearly sees this example as exceptional, but not impossible. God is sovereign and can do as He pleases, even to the point of saving a dead pagan... This situation was entirely different in the West, where the Perpetua/Dinocrates text was the major one in view and where Augustine’s interpretation of it held sway for centuries” (*Rescue for the Dead*, pp. 74-75).

Finally, Trumbower quotes Metropolitan Kallistos Ware on the Kneeling Prayers at Pentecost: “O Christ our God; Who didst descend into Hades and didst shatter the everlasting bars, showing an ascent unto them that sat below...Who on this all-perfect and saving Feast hast vouchsafed to accept the supplicatory prayers of forgiveness for them that are held in Hades; Who grantest us great hope that unto the departed held in the bondage of grief, there be sent from Thee rest and refreshment...”

Ware goes on to point out that even though this prayer does not specifically request a release from Hades*, in the opinion of many Orthodox Christians such a release is possible because “in the period between Christ’s resurrection and His Second Coming the gates

* Ware actually uses the word Hell instead of Hades, and indeed the archaic definition of Hell is simply the realm of the dead. However, in modern usage and understanding, Hell means the abode of condemned souls and devils; the place of punishment for the wicked after death (The American Heritage Dictionary).

scripts produced after the Florentine Council *leave out or significantly alter Saint Thecla's prayer for Falconilla*. In Rordorf's view, this was one way to respond! Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that even secular scholars observe, as demonstrated in the fascinating *Rescue for the Dead* by Jeffery A. Trumbower, that the Eastern Orthodox Church has not had any problems with accepting the incidents in the lives of Saint Thecla, Saint Gregory the Great, and it can be added, Saint Perpetua's prayer for her brother Dinocrates (a child of seven who died as a pagan) as examples of how nothing is final in the eternal fate of any human being before the Day of Judgment.

Not surprisingly, Augustine was the principle player in discounting the incidents in lives of Saint Thecla and Saint Perpetua in the West. The first life he ignores, and of the second he gives a strained interpretation to make it fit with his own speculations on grace, free will, predestination and baptism, for which he is famous (or infamous). Augustine goes so far as to insist that Dinocrates "must" have been baptized for his sister's prayers to have been effective, and that her brother had apostatized to paganism (a child of five, six, or seven!?) and that is why he is referred to as a pagan. When challenged on this, he asked his opponents to prove that Dinocrates (who was born of pagan parents) had not been baptized...to be logical Dinocrates "had" to be baptized for him to find consolation through Saint Perpetua's prayers. Of course, Augustine's same mechanical logic led him to believe that unbaptized babies (and, indeed, almost all human beings) were damned, and they were damned because God had predestinated them to be so! This is all rather surprising, because Saint Perpetua was from Carthage in North Africa, which was Augustine's locale, and popular piety had led the local churches there to read her whole life in the service in her honor, the prayer and granting of consolation to her brother Dinocrates included. To be fair, it does not say in Saint Perpetua's life that her brother was in the same place she was; he had just been given great consolation and relief in the place he was in, and there

of the holy men and confessors, saved her husband, the iconoclast Emperor Theophilus abhorred by God, from the everlasting torments.*

The Greek Text

Ἐν Σαββάτῳ δὲ αἰεὶ τὴν τῶν ψυχῶν μνησίαν ποιούμεθα, ὅτι τὸ Σάββατον, κατάπανσιν σημαίνει Ἑβραϊστί· καὶ τῶν τεθνεώτων τοίνυν ὡς τῶν βιοτικῶν καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπάντων καταπαυσάμενων, καθ' ἣν καταπαυσίμῳ τῶν ἡμερῶν, τὰς ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν δεήσεις ποιούμεθα, ὃ δὴ καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν κεκοράτηκε γίνεσθαι Σάββατον. Τὸ δέ γε νῦν, καθολικῶς μνημονεύομεν, ὑπὲρ παντός θεόμενοι εὐσεβοῦς· εἰδότες καὶ γὰρ οἱ θεῖοι Πατέρες, ὡς τὰ ὑπὲρ τῶν κεκοιμημένων γινόμενα, μνημόσυνα λέγω, ἐλεημοσύναι, καὶ λειτουργίαι, μεγάλην αὐτοῖς παρέχει ἄνεσιν καὶ ὠφέλειαν, καὶ ἰδίως, καὶ κοινῇ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν τοῦτο ποιεῖν ἐπιτρέπουσι, παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων Ἀποστόλων τοῦτο παραλαβόντες, ὡς εἴρηται, καθὰ καὶ ὁ Ἀρεοπαγίτης φησὶ Διονύσιος.

Ὅτι δὲ ὠφελεῖ τὰς ψυχὰς τὰ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν γινόμενα, δῆλον μὲν καὶ ἐξ ἄλλων πολλῶν, ἀλλὰ δὴ καὶ ἐκ τῆς κατὰ τὸν ἅγιον Μακάριον ἱστορίας. Ὅς ἀνδρὸς ἀσεβοῦς Ἕλληνας ξηρὸν κρινίον, κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν παριὼν εὗρηκώς, ῥητο. Εἴ τινα ποτε ἐν Ἀδῇ παραμυθίας αἰσθῆσιν ἔχουσι; Τὸ δὲ ἀπεκρίνατο, πολλὴν αὐτοὺς ἔχειν ἄνεσιν, ἥνικα ὑπὲρ τῶν Κεκοιμημένων εὐχῇ, Πάτερ, εἰπόν. Ἦν γὰρ τοῦτο ποιῶν ὁ μέγας, καὶ θεόμενος τοῦ Θεοῦ, μαθεῖν ἐφιέμενος, εἰ ὠφέλειά τις τοῖς προκεκοιμημένοις ἐντεῦθεν ἐγίνετο. Ἀλλὰ καὶ Γρηγόριος ὁ Διάλογος, διὰ προσευχῆς, τὸν Βασιλέα Τραϊανὸν σέσωκεν ἀκούσας παρὰ Θεοῦ, μὴ ἄλλοτε ποτε αὐτὸν ὑπὲρ ἀσεβοῦς δεηθῆναι. Ναὶ μὲν, τὸν καὶ θεοστύγῃ Θεόφιλον, Θεοδώρα ἡ Βασίλισ, διὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ ὁμολογητῶν Ἀνδρῶν, τῶν βασάνων ἐξήρπασε καὶ διέσωσεν, ὡς ἱστορεῖται.

* Copyright, Synaxarion of the *Lenten Triodion and Pentecostarion*, edited by Fr. David Kidd and Mother Gabiella Ursache; HDM Press, Rives Junction, Michigan, 1999, pp. 25-26.

Въ сѣбѣ ѡтѣ же прїснѣ дѣшѣмъ пѣмѣтъ творѣмъ, ꙗко сѣбѣ ѡтѣ
 ѡпокоѣнїе знаменѣтъ єврейскѣ. И ѡмѣршнхъ ѡбѣ, ꙗко ѡ
 житѣйскнхъ и прочнхъ вѣхъ ѡпокоѣвшнхъ и въ поконѣмъ
 днѣ, за нѣхъ мольбѣ творѣмъ, ѣже ѡбѣ и на всѣхъ ѡдѣржѣмъ
 бывѣти сѣбѣ ѡтѣ: ꙗ ѣже нынѣ соборѣ помнѣмъ, за всѣаго
 молѣмъ бѣгочестнѣаго. Бѣдѣмъ ѡбѣ вѣстѣннѣн ѡтѣ, ꙗко
 ꙗже за ѡсѣпшнхъ бывѣмъ пѣмѣти, глаголю, мѣмѣтнѣ и
 слѣбѣ, великѣ тѣмъ подаѣтъ ѡсѣбѣ и пользѣ: и ѡсѣбѣ и
 ѡбѣ сѣ цѣрквѣ творѣти подѣмъ, ѡ сѣхъ ꙗпѣ сѣ прїемѣ,
 ꙗко речѣмъ. ꙗкоже и ꙗреопѣтѣ глаголетѣ дѣонѣсїи: ꙗко поль-
 зѣмъ дѣшѣ ѡ нѣхъ бывѣмъ. ꙗвѣ ѡбѣ и ѡ нѣхъ мнѣмъ.
 Но и ѡ повѣстѣ по сѣмѣ макарїю, ꙗже мѣмъ нечестнѣа єлннѣ
 сѣхъ лѣнѣ на пѣтѣ мнѣмъ ѡвѣмъ, вопрошѣмъ: ꙗже нѣкое
 когдѣ во ѣдѣ ѡтѣмъ чѣмъ нѣмъ; Тѣмъ же ѡвѣмъ: мнѣмъ
 тѣмъ ѡсѣбѣ нѣмъ, внѣмъ за ѡсѣпшнхъ молѣмъ ѡтѣ,
 рѣмъ. Бѣмъ во сѣ творѣ великѣ и молѣмъ бѣ, ѡвѣмъ
 желѣмъ, ꙗже пользѣ нѣмъ прѣдѣсѣмъ ѡсѣмъ вѣмъ. Но и
 грїгорїи бѣмъ, мѣмъ царѣ траїѣнѣ сѣ, слѣмъ ѡ
 бѣ, никогдѣмъ ємъ ѡ нечестнѣмъ молѣмъ. Бѣ ѡбѣ, и бѣ-
 мѣмъ дѣмъ дѣмъ царѣ сѣмъ мѣмъ и нѣмъ
 ѡ мѣмъ и спасѣ, ꙗкоже повѣмъ.



EAST AND WEST AND PRAYERS FOR THE REPOSED

Or
 “Go East, Young Man!”

by

Fr. Sergius, monk, of Holy Transfiguration Monastery,
 Brookline, MA

At the Council of Florence, Saint Mark of Ephesus, a bishop renowned for his learning and faithfulness to Holy Tradition, often quoted Saint John of Damascus, the very authoritative Church Father, in his debate with the Latins over the question of Purgatory. Saint Mark cites Saint John of Damascus' mention of the incident in the life of Saint Thecla, in which, by her intercession, she rescued the deceased pagan Falconilla from perdition. Saint Mark gives as another example Saint John Damascene's narrative of how Pope Saint Gregory the Great delivered the soul of the pagan Roman Emperor Trajan. Saint Mark was demonstrating that the Church had the power through her prayers to help not only notorious sinners who reposed in the Church, but that saints were known to have prayed even for those who died outside the Church and had even, like Trajan, persecuted the faithful. The West had more or less adopted Augustine's position that the Church could help only those who reposed in the Church with insignificant sins. Saint Mark said that it will not be known until the Day of Judgment on how effective the prayers the Church will be for these sinners, while also qualifying this by saying that the Church can only pray for those who belong to her. He makes reference to the private prayers of two saints for pagans to underscore his point that if this is possible, so is the other (i.e. that the Church can alleviate the sufferings of her reposed and even release them from the eternal punishment that awaits them).

It is interesting that after this confrontation at the Council of Florence, according to the scholar Willy Rordorf, three Latin manu-